

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 10456

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, GR

SUBJECT: UDC UNDERGOES SPLIT

REF: ATHENS 0721

1. SUMMARY: THREE LEFT-WING MEMBERS OF UDC RESIGNED FROM THE PARTY EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 25. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THESE RESIGNATIONS PRESAGE FURTHER SIGNIFICANT EROSION IN UDC'S RANKS. NOR DO WE EXPECT THAT THEY WILL MOVE PARTY LEADER GEORGE MAVROS INTO MORE FOCIFEROUS OPPOSITION TO PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS, PARTICULARLY ON MATTERS OF FOREIGN POLICY. END SUMMARY

2. THE OPPOSITION UNION OF THE DEMOCRATIC CENTER (UDC) LOST A BIT MORE OF ITS LEFT WING IN A RATHER LIMITED SEPTEMBER 25 SCHISM. DEPUTIES GOERGIOS A. MANGAKIS, ANASTASIOS MINIS AND HARALAMBOS PROTOPAPPAS, ALL THREE MEMBERS OF THE PARTY'S "NEW FORCES" FACTION, RESIGNED, PUBLICLY ACCUSING THE PARTY OF MOVING AWAY FROM THE "PROGRESSIVE" DEMOCRATIC POSITION AND BACK TOWARDS CONSERVATISM.

3. THE UDC LEADERSHIP HAS SOUGHT TO MINIMIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF THESE THREE RESIGNATIONS BY PUTTING FORTH AN
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IMAGE OF ACTIVITY AND UNITY. IT HAS ANNOUNCED THAT IT

WILL BE HOLDING A NATIONAL CONFERENCE IN IRAKLION, CRETE, DECEMBER 3-5, IN PREPARATION FOR THE PARTY'S FIRST (AND LONG POSTPONED) NATIONAL CONGRESS JUNE 25-27, 1977 IN THESSALONIKI. THE PARTY IS ALSO SEEKING TO PUT INTO PRACTICE THE "SHADOW CABINET" IT CREATED EARLIER THIS MONTH (CONSISTING OF SMALL COMMITTEES OF UDC DEPUTIES WHO WILL FOLLOW SPECIFIC AREAS OF GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY CORRESPONDING TO THE KEY MINISTRIES). AT THE SAME TIME, OTHER DEPUTIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE NEW FORCES MOVEMENT (TSOUDEROU, PAPADOPOULOS, C. ALAVANOS AND PESMAZOGLOU) HAVE ALL DEPLORED AND PUBLICLY CRITICIZED THEIR FORMER COLLEAGUES FOR WALKING OUT OF THE UDC.

4. THE THREE DEFECTORS WILL OPERATE, FOR THE TIME BEING, AS INDEPENDENTS. LIKE DEPUTY DIMITRI TSATSOS, WHO WAS EJECTED FROM THE PARTY IN JUNE (ATHENS 6594), THEY ALL BELIEVE IN THE NEED FOR THE "PROGRESSIVE" FORCE OF GREECE TO WORK TOGETHER TO DEVELOP INTO A SERIOUS LEFTIST POLITICAL ALTERNATIVE TO THE GREEK RIGHT. UNLIKE MOST UDC DEPUTIES, BUT LIKE MANY ATHENIAN LIBERALS AND INTELLECTUALS, THESE MEN FEEL THAT THERE EXISTS A CRYING NEED IN THE COUNTRY FOR SUCH A MOVEMENT WHICH, ONCE CONSTITUTED, WILL BECOME A MAJOR POLITICAL FORCE. WHETHER THIS ANALYSIS REFLECTS ANYTHING MORE THAN A PROJECTION OF THEIR OWN PREFERENCES REMAINS TO BE DEMONSTRATED. BUT THEY ARE CONVINCED THAT THE "NEW FORCES," ILIOU'S UNITED DEMOCRATIC LEFT (EDA), AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE INTERIOR ARE NATURAL ALLIES IN THE PURSUIT OF A "UNITED LEFT." (MAVROS TOLD US DURING EUR/SE DEPUTY DIRECTOR EWING'S CALL SEPTEMBER 27 THAT HE EXPECTED THE THREE DEFECTORS TO JOIN KKE-INTERIOR EVENTUALLY.)

5. (ILIOU HAS RECENTLY BEEN SPEAKING PUBLICLY ABOUT THE NEED FOR A "DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE" AMONG SUCH FORCES. HE SOUNDS VERY MUCH LIKE THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE MUSINGS OF MANGAKIS AND HIS COLLEAGUES. WHETHER ANYBODY WANTS TO JOIN FORCES WITH TSATSOS AT THIS TIME IS AN OPEN QUESTION. THE GOG HAS -- AS IT PROMISED SOME MONTHS AGO -- MADE AVAILABLE TO ALL POLITICAL PARTIES THE OLD FILES OF THE GREEK MILITARY POLICE, THE NOTORIOUS ESA. MANY ATHENS POLITICIANS SUSPECT THAT TSATSOS EMERGES FROM THESE FILES, AT BEST, AS A MAN WHO TALKED TOO MUCH TO THE JUNTA AND, AT WORST, AS AN ACTIVE AGENT OF THE

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JUNTA.)

6. THE LONG-TERM SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE RESIGNATIONS ASIDE, THE SCHISM IN THE UDC IS OF IMMEDIATE INTEREST TO THE USG BECAUSE OF THE POSSIBLE EFFECTS IT MAY HAVE ON PARTY LEADER MAVROS AND HIS WILLINGNESS AND ABILITY TO SUSTAIN HIS OVERALL SUPPORT FOR CARAMANLIS' FOREIGN POLICY. THERE IS WIDESPREAD DISAFFECTION IN THE PARTY

WITH MAVROS' LEADERSHIP, AND IN PARTICULAR WITH HIS FAILURE TO ASSAY MORE VISIBLY AND VOCIFEROUSLY THE ROLE OF OPPOSITION LEADER. MANY UDCER'S FEEL THAT ALL TOO OFTEN ANDREAS PAPANDREOU HAS STOLEN THE SPOTLIGHT THAT SHOULD BE THAT OF MAVROS AND THEIR PARTY. IN VIEW OF THIS, IN FACT, IN RECENT MONTHS MAVROS HAS BEEN MORE CRITICAL OF CARAMANLIS WHILE STILL BASICALLY SUPPORTING HIS FOREIGN POLICIES. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT MAVROS, IN THE WAKE OF THESE DEFECTIONS, MAY FEEL COMPELLED TO TAKE AN EVEN STRONGER PUBLIC STANCE AGAINST CARAMANLIS, WHI WHICH CASE IT WILL BECOME MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE PRIME MINISTER TO CONTINUE HIS POLICY OF RELATIVE MODERATION ON SUCH ISSUES AS GREEK-U.S. RELATIONS AND GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS.

6. ON BALANCE, HOWEVER, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT MAVROS IS GOING TO SWING VERY FAR TOWARDS MORE VOCIFEROUS OPPOSITION (AND WHEN WE TALKED TO HIM ON SEPTEMBER 27 HE SEEMED FAIRLY RELAXED ABOUT THE DEFECTIONS). SUCH A DEVELOPMENT WOULD BE OUT OF CHARACTER FOR THE MILD MAVROS. MORE IMPORTANTLY, MAVROS BELIEVES IN THE NEED FOR A LOYAL OPPOSITION AT THIS TIME, A CONSIDERATION THAT ARISES IN PART FROM HIS RECOGNITION OF THE FRAGILITY OF GREEK DEMOCRACY AND IN PART FROM HIS BELIEF THAT WHEN CARAMANLIS DECIDES TO MOVE UP TO THE PRESIDENCY, HE WILL TURN TO MAVROS AND ASK HIM TO JOIN THE GOVERNMENT AS PRIME MINISTER. AS A RESULT, WE EXPECT MAVROS -- AND, WITH HIM, HIS PARTY -- WILL CONTINUE HIS ROLE OF MUTED AND LOYAL OPPOSITION.

7. UNRELATED TO THE DEFECTION, DEPUTY GEORGE MYLONAS' RESIGNATION AS UDC SECRETARY GENERAL BECAME PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE SEPTEMBER 25. MYLONAS' RESIGNATION BECOMES EFFECTIVE NEXT MONTH -- HE REMAINS LOYAL BOTH TO MAVROS AND TO THE PARTY.

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8. WITH THESE DEFECTIONS IN UDC RANKS, THE PARTY LINEUP IN THE PARLIAMENT IS NOW AS FOLLOWS:

NEW DEMOCRACY - 215 DEPUTIES

UDC - 57 DEPUTIES

PASOK - 15 DEPUTIES

KKE-EXTERIOR - 5 DEPUTIES

KKE-INTERIOR - 2 DEPUTIES

EDA - 1 DEPUTY

INDEPENDENTS - 5 DEPUTIES
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